

## Andrew Jackson to Henry Baldwin, February 27, 1832, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO HENRY BALDWIN.

Washington, February 27, 1832.

*My D'r Sir*, The frankness with which Mr. Lacock's letter is written,<sup>1</sup> that you had the goodness to read to me today, assured me that he will not

<sup>1</sup> Baldwin wrote to Lacock (see vol. II., p. 345), asking for certain information with respect to Jackson's letter to Monroe of Jan. 6, 1818. From Lacock's reply, Feb. 18, 1832, Baldwin made the following extract and sent it to Jackson: "Before I can agree to furnish the facts requested, it would be necessary, and but fair for me to be informed of the use intended to be made of the facts. If it be to give them publicity, I should hesitate before I should agree to furnish any information that would bring me before the public, as the friend of Jackson or Calhoun, nor would it conform, it seemed to me, with your present situation to be made the medium of such a communication. Mr. Monroe is dead, and politically speaking I consider Mr. Crawford in the same situation; the situation in which I stood with these men, especially the president, would forbid me to make a disclosure that by implication might be construed to their disadvantage.

deny me the privilege of extracts from it so far as it relates to the interviews he had with Mr. Calhoun whilst he was preparing his report for the Senate in 1819 on the subject of the Seminole war, particularly when he is informed that my object in requesting them is to support your statement in 1824 and 1831 that you understood in 1819 that the Johnny Rhea letter so called (my confidential letter to Mr. Monroe) was known to him and believed to have been made the basis of his report. Those extracts are also important as shewing

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how much Mr. Lacock was imposed upon by the duplicity of Mr. Calhoun and how much injustice has been done me by the same cause in having represented me as transcending my orders and violating the constitution.

“The President and Vice President are the only men living who can be concerned in the disclosures in question, nor can I feel such an interest in their personal disputes as to furnish either with the means of defence or annoyance. How you are or can be affected in any way I do not comprehend, nor do I understand what you mean when you say ‘my object in asking this information is to support and confirm what I stated as my belief in 1824 and 1831.’ The truth is I do not know what it was you did state at the times mentioned, nor to whom nor for what purpose the statements alluded to was made. And until I do know can I discover, why you wish the information in relation to yourself. So far as your character may be concerned I should be willing and anxious to have justice done you if in doing it I am not called upon to violate those principles of honor by which I trust my conduct has always been governed.

“That at the time I knew as well as I now do, everything connected with the Johnny Ray letter is most certain: This information was not *at the time recd* from Calhoun. I never had a copy of the letter. I had from Calhoun his views fully in relation to Jacksons conduct in the Seminole war, they agreed with mine, he never told me the course that the other members of the Cabinet wished to pursue in relation to that transaction, but said he had given up his course out of respect to the opinion of the President, who had adopted a course less strong, etc. All this I had known previous to my conversation with Mr. Calhoun. Except Adams (who is sure to be on extremes) the President and his Cabinet agreed, as to the unconstitutional and illegal course pursued by Jackson and the only question was how they had best get out of the scrape. The middle course (often the worst) was taken ‘disavow the acts, surrender the posts, but neither punish nor censure the officers.’ When Calhoun published his pamphlet against the President he sent me one, in it my name was gratuitously introduced. I wrote him a letter, not a flattering one, it contained reminiscences, facts and observations not a few. He Calhoun told Marks and others

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that he had read the letter from me, this justified me in telling you and others that I had written to him. I have a copy of the letter, he may publish it if he pleases. I shall never except in self defence. It reflects with severity upon the Administration, and all concerned in justifying Jackson at the expense of the constitution and laws of the country. These things have passed away with most of the individuals who were then concerned. although conscientiously satisfied with the course I pursued, retrospect is not pleasant, nor flattering to our country, let us look ahead, and save the nation if it can be saved. If the Govt. is overthrown it will be not by foreign, but domestic enemies, an act of political suicide alone can destroy us. The Nation look to the Supreme Court for protection, there is no man in the Nation upon whom the people lean with so much confidence as Judge Marshall. Let us boast as we please, our confidence and the stability of the government depend upon a few men who administer it. The rank and file of the nation have had and still have to a certain extent confidence in Genl. Jackson, But every step he takes is calculated to weaken that confidence.

“Gov. Wolf and his whole cabinet are at this moment as deadly hostile to Genl. Jackson as Sam. Ingham, and yet the old man is willing to be made the pack-horse to carry them along. That Wolf cannot be re-elected in this State is to me quite evident, and were it possible to break down Jackson this would do it.”

Under these circumstances I am sure that Mr. Lacock will freely dis[c]lose the facts adverted to: and I cannot but believe when he sees my expose that he will be convinced of the great injustice which his reliance upon the statements of Mr. Calhoun and others led him to deal out to me in his report to the Senate in February 1819. It is therefore that I ask extracts from his letter and that in the expose I am about to make I may use them for the purpose of doing justice to Mr. Crawford for injuries of which I was the innocent instrument, being deceived in the same manner by Mr. Calhoun.

If Mr. Lacock should refuse to furnish the extracts of his letters as requested, then I must request you to ask him to have the justice to state, whether he had not been put

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in full possession of the contents of my confidential letter to Mr. Monroe, called the Johny Rhea letter, and from what source he derived a knowledge of the contents of that letter? Whether Mr. Calhoun in his interviews with him as chairman of the committee investigating the Seminole Campaign and whilst engaged drawing up his report did not fully approve of Mr. Lacock's views as they were expressed in the said report made in February 1819: Whether Mr. Calhoun in the said interviews did not give it as his opinion that I had transcended my orders, violated the constitution, and called out the troops without the knowledge of the Governor of the state as charged in said report? Whether in these interviews did not Mr. Calhoun understand that Mr. Lacock had been made fully acquainted with the contents of the confidential, or Johny Rhea, letter, and did not Mr. Calhoun refer to that confidential letter as positive proof of my intention to violate my orders by my intended operation in Florida, and lastly, whether in the several interviews Mr. Calhoun had with Mr. Lacock whilst he was investigating the subject and preparing his report on the Seminole campaign, did he not fully approve of all the views and statements made by Mr. Lacock in said report, as made to the Senate, and if Mr. Calhoun did not agree with all, in what did he differ from Mr. Lacock, and did not Mr. Calhoun inform Mr. Lacock that he had moved in the cabinet council for my arrest or punishment and that he was overruled by the members of the cabinet; and if so by what members? and to give any other information that Mr. Lacock may please as it regards Mr. Calhoun's advice, sentiments or action on that occasion that induced Mr. Lacock to embody any or all of the facts he did in said report.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Writing to Lacock Feb. 25, 1832, Henry Baldwin said that he learned from Crawford in the winter of 1819–1820 the part Calhoun and others in the Cabinet took with respect to Jackson's Seminole campaign. He also said that he revealed this information to Jackson early in 1824, who acknowledged that he, Jackson, had been badly informed and had done Crawford an injustice. Jackson added that he would call on Crawford, and Baldwin asserts that the call was duly made.

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Your early attention to this will greatly oblige Yr. friend